

SUMMARY OF THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE NOVEMBER 19, 1998

The On-Site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Thursday, November 19, 1998, at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Steven Baker of the Arizona Department of Health. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the prototype organic and microbiology technical training courses for assessors.*

INTRODUCTION

Only three committee members were available to participate in the teleconference. They were joined for a portion of the teleconference by Ms. Barbara Finazzo of United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 2. Since committee participation was limited, only general discussion of the technical training courses was accomplished.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSES

Ms. Finazzo provided input regarding the prototype organic technical training course outlined by Mr. Baker. She noted some duplication of information due to overlap between different organic areas, and suggested that the information for these areas (high performance liquid chromatography [HPLC], gas chromatography [GC], and gas chromatography/mass spectrometry [GC/MS]) could be condensed under one heading. She also noted that state budgets will most likely not be able to afford the level of training currently proposed in the outline. Ms. Finazzo applauded the use of data packets. She suggested that the committee make no further changes to the course outlines, but post them on the NELAC Website and anticipate discussion at the NELAC Interim Meeting in January.

There ensued some discussion of the expense of training and of the level of technical expertise necessary to perform an audit. Committee members noted that not all current auditors are sufficiently trained. The question, therefore, is whether NELAC assessor training should follow the *status quo* or bring assessors up to the quality of the NELAC standard. It was suggested that states may face the realization that they will need to use third party assessors because they may not be able to afford the training necessary to bring their auditors up to the quality of the standard. The committee also suggested that NELAC will not succeed in the long term if NELAC auditors are not technically proficient. A participant noted that, since an auditor follows a paper trail consisting of maintenance records, documentation, standard operating procedures (SOPs), etc. rather than watching the preparation and analysis of a sample, the specifics of the different analytical techniques may not need to be covered in the technical training course. It was generally agreed that the committee must not become so narrow-minded in its thinking as to turn away people with experience in a certain discipline if they do not have a degree in that discipline.

Mr. Baker commented that the organic technical course is unique in its format and that the committee will benefit from the input of participants at the NELAC Interim Meeting. He also noted that its substantial content cannot be covered in only one or two days.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

The committee was reminded of the November 20 deadline for submitting proposed changes to the standard to Ms. Jeanne Mourrain of the EPA. The only change to the On-Site Assessment Standard is a change in the length of time allowed for a laboratory's response to an assessment. This change was made to reconcile inconsistencies between the On-Site Assessment and Accreditation Process Committees.

Mr. Baker still has not received the assessor checklists from Ms. Marlene Patillo. There was no significant discussion of the checklists.

Ms. Kelly Wilson volunteered to represent the On-Site Assessment Committee in the NELAC Board of Directors' teleconference on November 19, 1998, at 3:00 p.m. EST. It was agreed that she would communicate to the board the committee's official position on Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS). This position is that PBMS is not yet a reality, and until a more definitive move toward PBMS has been made, the committee will have to use prescriptive assessor checklists. The committee will try to make the standard as PBMS-friendly as possible.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Baker concluded the meeting by stating that, although it might not be possible to schedule another call teleconference before the NELAC Interim Meeting in January 1999, he will look into the possibility of holding another teleconference in late December or early January. If a teleconference is scheduled, Mr. Baker will communicate the specific dial-in details to the committee.

ACTION ITEMS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 28, 1998

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Wilson will represent the On-Site Assessment Committee in the NELAC Board of Directors' teleconference.	11/19/98

**PARTICIPANTS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE
OCTOBER 28, 1998**

Name	Affiliation	Phone/Fax/E-mail
Mr. Steven Baker, Chair	Arizona Department of Health	T: 602-255-3454 F: 602-255-3462 E: sbaker@hs.state.az.us
Ms. Rosanna Buhl (absent)	Battelle Ocean Sciences	T: 781-934-0571 F: 781-934-2124 E: buhl@batelle.org
Mr. R. Wayne Davis (absent)	South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control	T: 803-935-6856 F: 803-935-6859 E: davisrw@columb36.dhec.state.sc.us
Mr. Charles Dyer (absent)	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services	T: 603-271-2991 F: 603-271-2867 E: c_dyer@des.state.nh.us
Mr. Jack Hall	Quanterra, Inc.	T: 423-588-6401 F: 423-584-4315 E: hallj@quanterra.com
Mr. Stan Morton (absent)	US Department of Energy	T: 208-526-2186 F: 208-526-59647470 E: mortonjs@inel.gov
Ms. Marlene Patillo (absent)	Maryland Department of Environmental Health	T: 410-631-3646 F: 410-631-3733 E: mpatillo@mde.state.md.us
Ms. Athene Steinke (absent)	EA Laboratories	T: 410-771-4920 F: 410-771-4407 E: amt@eaeng.mhs.compuserve.com
Mr. William Toth, Jr. (Absent)	Worldwide Solutions for Tomorrow	T: 304-789-8684 F: E: btoth@erols.com
Mr. E. Charles Hartwig, Jr., Ombudsman (absent)	Florida Department of Health & Rehabilitative Services	T: 904-791-1550 F: 904-791-1567 E: charles_hartwig@hrs.state.fl.us
Ms. Kelly Wilson	CT&E Environmental Services, Inc.	T: 616-843-1877 F: 616-845-9942 E: tviers@voyager.net
Ms. Barbara Finazzo	USEPA Region 2	T: (732) 321 - 6754 F: (732) 321 - 4381 E: finazzo.barbara@epamail.epa.gov
Ms. Lisa Greene (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: 919-541-7483 F: 919-541-7386 E: lcg@rti.org